

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 1927

Happy twelfth birthday to me! I am so excited! Mr. Roberts just stopped by to drop off the Singer sewing machine Mrs. Roberts had borrowed from Mother until Mrs. Roberts' new one comes in, and he said he had a surprise for my birthday. I had been in the kitchen with Mother and Mary, trying to keep Alex from sticking his fingers in my birthday cake batter, when Pa called me to the door. Mr. Roberts wished me a Happy Birthday and said he had a gift for me from William and that he thought Mother might let me open it, despite her present need of my baking skills. After saying this, he glanced up at Mother, who had also come to the door, and she told me to go ahead and open it.

I did and when I saw that it was a journal I begged Mother to let me come up to my room and write in it. She told me to run up but not to spend too long. I promised her that I wouldn't. I can *hardly* contain my excitement.

There. I just got up and did a little dance around my room. I feel that that is not a good enough expression of my happiness, so I think that after supper and chores, I will go down to the store and thank Will personally. I have to go now, because Mother is calling me. How can she, when she knows that I have just begun writing in my first-ever journal? I won't ask her that because I would be scolded for being impertinent and then she would say, "Time waits for no man, Emily."

I have decided to use this journal as a place where I can be “the voice of history.” Mr. Meredith, the postmaster, loves history. To him, everything is either “the voice of history” or “history in the making.” I suppose he’s right. I know that whenever Mother tells me a story about people I’ve never known, like my Mémère Bilodeau, I think of how much I wish I knew more about them. If only those people had left behind a journal like I’m writing in now! So if I fill this book with all of the things that happen to me, full of our family stories, maybe my daughters or granddaughters or nieces can read it and know all about us Pattersens and our antics.

I opened the rest of my birthday gifts after supper.

From Mother and Pa I got a beautiful new store-bought dress! It is navy blue and has a wide white collar and it falls just below my knees. I tried it on and Joe said I looked very spiffy. Pa said it reminded him of the dress I was wearing when I met the Prince.

Alex didn’t know the story, so of course Pa said that he was talking about the second of September, 1919, when the Prince of Wales visited North Bay. I was only three years old (almost four), Joe was seven, Alex was just a baby, and Mother and Pa and Uncle Mathieu and Pèpère took us up to North Bay to see the Prince. When I saw him I started yelling and laughing and waving and jumping up and down and the Prince smiled and waved at me. It’s true that I was wearing a blue dress, but I hope I have changed in other ways since then!

From Joe I got a book called *Anne of Green Gables*, by Lucy Maud Montgomery, which I have heard about and am excited to read. Alex gave me a very nice paper he wrote himself and it is titled “How to Win A Snowball Fight (Since You Are Not A Boy)” — only he spelled “since” (and some other words) wrong. He is excited for winter. I will paste the paper in here as a keepsake.

HOW TO WIN A SNOWBALL FIGHT
(SINSE YOU ARE NOT A BOY)

1. make sure the snow is stiky
2. gather some snow in your hands
3. press it together and turn it over in your hands till it is in the shape of a ball
4. throw it reelly hard at someone but not your brothers
5. keep doing this till you win but make shur you don't get hit by anyone elses snowballs

Of course I'm always sure to do these things, except I *do* aim the snowballs at my brothers!

The aunts and uncles bought me a little clock. Auntie Annabelle picked it out and the Relatives in England sent a card saying that it is from them, too. It is a nice little size and I have it on the night table beside my bed. Mother said it will be perfect for my fireplace mantel when I get married! I asked how she could be so sure that I am going to get married at all, and she grinned and said that that's how she used to think until she met Pa!

That got me thinking about Pa and his past and about how proud I am to have a father who is determined and knows how to make do. He runs the farm, and he does very well for having come from England on his own as a young man with almost no experience in farming. He says that what he did know he learned from spending his boyhood summers helping on his uncle's farm in the country.

Pépère Bilodeau gave the farm to Pa when he died, instead of to Uncle Mathieu. It was supposed to go to Uncle Mathieu, except he had already inherited his father-in-law's business as a butcher. So since our family had already been living on this farm to take care of Pépère, it went to Mother and Pa. I've heard people say that Pa came into Old Money by marrying Mother. Pa says we are blessed to be more or less in the middle class because farming isn't usually the most secure thing. It depends so much on nature. Even as it is, Pa spends the winters working in the lumber camps because our farm doesn't bring in money in the cold seasons.

P.S. I didn't get to thank Will for the journal. Maybe tomorrow.